

The Gospel of Mark: Undomesticated  
Mark 1:35-39

I. Introduction

- a. Our semi-domesticated cat
  - i. He is genetically built for more than his current life offers him.
  - ii. He seems to understand that his habitat is not what it was meant to be.
  - iii. Yet, because he is a housecat, he is unprepared for the wild.
  - iv. So, when people come over, we must put him up because he is too wild.
  - v. But we also must keep him from going out of the front door because he is too domesticated.
- b. I wonder if the modern Christian is not unlike a semi-domesticated housecat.
  - i. We know we don't belong here.
  - ii. Yet, we are also awfully comfortable with some of what this world offers.
  - iii. We're at conflict with the world.
  - iv. But we're also not ready for the wild.
- c. We see this aspect of humanity in our Scripture for today. The disciples were ready to leave their lives to become fishers of men, but they were also unprepared to follow the ever-unpredictable Jesus. They were semi-domesticated men following a wild God.

Mark has just told us about one day, a Sabbath day, in the life of Jesus and His new disciples. To say the day was wild would be an understatement. Jesus had cast out demons and healed the sick... at home, at synagogue, and in the streets. It must have been an exhausting day for the man, Jesus. Surely, He needed rest, yet He only sleeps for a while before secretly slipping away under the cover of night to pray. Simon, Andrew, James, and John awake later to find Jesus gone. Maybe they thought it was time to go to the crowds and keep building Jesus' exploding popularity. Maybe they were even cross with Jesus for not being available, for not "following the plan." They were soon to find out, however, that Jesus had a very different set of plans. Their expectations, along with those of the crowds, were moot points for Jesus. This was no semi-domesticated house cat they were dealing with, this was the Lion of Judah.

II. Text: Mark 1:35-39

- a. **Jesus is undomesticated.**
  - i. The Greek expression used tells us that Jesus likely left in what we would call "the middle of the night."
  - ii. Jesus, then, escapes to the wilderness.
    - 1. A theme running throughout Mark 1. God is busy in the wilderness.
    - 2. This is where John the Baptist is at work.
    - 3. This is where Jesus goes to be tempted after His baptism.

4. The wilderness motif connects back to the rest of Scripture in the Exodus story.
- iii. Jesus is not controlled by the will of the disciples nor that of the crowds.

While Jesus served people, He was never mastered by them. He had one master, His heavenly Father. And while His mission was incredibly important, His relationship with the Father always reigned supreme.

**b. The Father is more important than the Father's mission.**

- i. In verse 36, we are told that the disciples "searched" for Jesus. In the Greek, the verb connotes a more urgent, even antagonistic feeling. Something more akin to "ran down" or "pursued."
- ii. Jesus' mission was to show the Father's love to humanity, but He started by knowing the Father's love Himself.
  1. How can one share what one has not experienced?
  2. Let me tell you about my Father...
- iii. Is your faith life more of a job than a relationship?

When we turn faith into a job, we make it more about us than the Father. And this begs the question... whose mission are we working so hard on anyway?

**c. The Father's mission is more important than mine.**

- i. Jesus' mission was not to bask in His new-found fame and adoration.
- ii. Jesus came to preach the Gospel.
- iii. If our religious work doesn't preach the Gospel, then it is not for Jesus that we work.

Mark tells us that Jesus came preaching, "Repent, and believe the Gospel." This is, of course, good news, but it also begs us to repent; to change; to lean not on our own understanding but to trust in the Lord... the Lord who is in the wilderness, waiting for us to escape the man-made scaffolding of our tame lives to experience His untamed power and love, to forgo the zoo-like captivity of religiosity, and experience the wild of relationship. And as we do, the concerns of this world will run us down, as the disciples did with Jesus, with the tyranny of the urgent, and it is in that moment that we find what is really so good about this news. Our God is not a list of do's and don'ts. No, He is the Lion of Judah, and one day every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow at His name, including all the so-called gods we are working so hard to satisfy in our tame little lives, and there will be nothing but us and Him for eternity. Jesus subject to no one and nothing but the Father... the Father who just wants to be with Him, as we He wants to be with us. Can we, under the cover of night, step away from our tame 21<sup>st</sup> century American dreams, to experience Jesus as He is... God in the wild? As we close, let me ask you three questions in this same vein.

### III. Undomesticated

#### a. **Is your faith domesticated?**

- i. Does your experience of God fit neatly into man-made constructs?
- ii. **Enter the wilderness with Jesus.**

To come to the wilderness with the undomesticated Jesus is to forgo all expectation and simply commune with God on His terms. And if we come to Jesus on His terms that is where we will experience faith not as a task to be completed, but rather a relationship to be lived.

#### b. **Do you follow Jesus because you love Him, or because you're supposed to?**

- i. Why are you here today, worshipping the God of the universe? Duty? Tradition? Or something more?
- ii. **Quit trying to pay God back for something you cannot earn and just be His.**

When we define ourselves in light of our relationship with God and not by what we can do for God... as sons and daughters of God, not as hired hands... as the bridegroom of Jesus, not as friends with benefits... as princes and princesses of the King, not as unnamed peasants... only then will we live on mission for Jesus.

#### c. **What are you working for?**

- i. Are you living a fulfilling life, or are you just desperate for one?
- ii. **God doesn't just have a plan for your life; He is the plan for your life!**